

**Seaman John Joseph Ogden, Number 2294x, is buried in Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery, Gosport, in the southern English county of Hampshire.**

**Having relinquished his occupation, likely that of fisherman, and having then travelled from Campbell's Creek on the west coast of the Island to St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on November 16 of 1916 John Joseph Ogden reported...to duty...at the Naval Reserve training ship, HMS *Briton*, moored in the harbour (see below).**

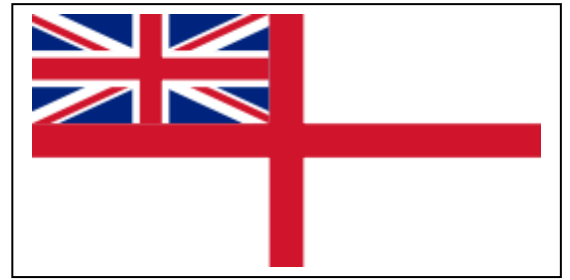
On that same mid-November day he enlisted\* for the first time into the Reserve (see further below), was signed on to serve for the...*Duration of the War*\*\*...and successfully underwent the required medical assessment on the morrow.

He also likely attested at this time, pledging his allegiance to the King-Emperor, George V.

(Right: George V, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India: as a boy and young man he had served in the Royal Navy from 1877 until 1891 and always retained a fondness for the Senior Service. – The photograph of the King attired in the uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet is from the Royal Collection Trust web-site and taken in or about 1935.)



**\*\*At the outset of the War, perhaps because it was felt by the authorities that it would be a conflict of short duration, the recruits enlisted for only a single year. As the War progressed, however, this was obviously going to cause problems and the men were encouraged to re-enlist. Later recruits – as of or about May of 1916 - signed on for the ‘Duration’ at the time of their original enlistment.**



(Right above: The White Ensign has been flown by the Royal Navy in its present form since about the year 1800 although other naval ensigns had existed for at least two centuries. It consists of a red St. George's Cross – the national flag of England - on a white field with the Union Flag\* in the upper canton.)

**\*The Union Flag is commonly referred to as the ‘Union Jack’; this is, in fact, a misnomer since a flag is referred to as a ‘Jack’ only when flown from the bow of a ship.**

**Note: During the years preceding the Great War the only military force on the Island of Newfoundland – apart from a handful of ill-fated local attempts – was to be the Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland). Even so, it was to be some thirty years after the withdrawal of British troops from the Dominion in 1870 before the Reserve came into being in 1902.**

**Just fewer than four-hundred men were sought to enroll as seamen – apparently automatically at the rank of Able Seaman - and to present themselves annually in St. John's for five years in order to train for a period of twenty-eight days per annum. Allowed to report at a time of their own choosing, it is perhaps not surprising that these volunteers – mostly fishermen – were to opt to train during the winter months when fishing work was minimal.**

**Expenses were apparently defrayed for the most part by the British (Imperial) Government and an attempt was made to ensure the number of recruits would be kept constantly at a maximum. This practice and policy was then to be continued up until the onset of hostilities some twelve years later.**



*Of course, the purpose of having a reserve force at any time is to provide a trained force ready at any time to serve at a time of need or crisis. Thus in August of 1914, upon the Declaration of War by the government in London, hundreds of those men of the Royal Naval Reserve (Newfoundland) were to make their way to St. John's, from there to take passage overseas to bolster the ranks of the Royal Navy.*

*An elderly vessel, HMS 'Calypso', having become surplus to the Admiralty's needs, had been provided to the Dominion of Newfoundland by the Royal Navy in 1902 for training purposes. After some debate it was eventually decided that she would be permanently moored in the harbour of the capital, her superstructure reduced, and a wooden shelter built on her upper deck to provide training facilities and living quarters for the prospective naval recruits.*



*(Right above: HMS 'Calypso' in full sail. She was to be re-named 'Briton' in early 1916 when a new 'Calypso', a modern cruiser, was about to be launched by the Royal Navy. – This Royal Navy photograph of the 'Newfoundland Calypso' taken in 1898, is by courtesy of Admiralty House Museum)*

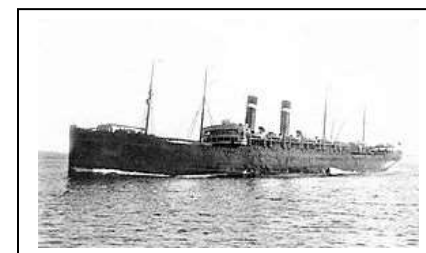
*(Right: Naval reservists from Newfoundland, during the early days of the Great War, before their departure for the United Kingdom - from The War Illustrated)*



*(Right: The newly-constructed C-Class cruiser 'Calypso' of 1916, seen here on an un-recorded date during the later years of the Great War, was to be sunk by an Italian submarine in 1940. – from Wikipedia)*



Twenty days following his enrollment, on December 6 of that same year, Seaman Ogden – as one of a draft of fifty naval reservists and a single Chief Petty Officer - departed Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, for the United Kingdom. The transport vessel was the *White Star-Dominion Line* ship *SS Southland* en route from Portland, Maine, to Liverpool – the vessel had previously been called *Vaderland*, a Dutch or Belgian ship whose name had been deemed too Germanic-sounding and which later, in June of 1917, was to be torpedoed and lost while en route from Liverpool to Philadelphia.



*\*It appears that in many cases, even if the recruit in question had not already previously been with the Royal Naval Reserve, the required twenty-eight day training period, all or partially, was waived by 'Royal Proclamation'.*

*(Right above: The photograph of the Red Star Line ship 'Vaderland' – later 'Southland' – is from the Wikipedia web-site.)*

Of course, Seaman Ogden's draft had left St. John's for Halifax some days before the SS *Southland* sailed for Liverpool. But ascertaining how the reservists were to journey to there has proved to be more than difficult. There were two reasonable possibilities for a contingent of some fifty persons: by train to Port aux Basques, a ferry-ride across the Cabot Strait, and then a train journey once again on to Halifax; or there was the direct passage by ship from St. John's to Halifax – both means of transport necessitating up to three days' travel.

Whichever was to be the case, a revised schedule saw *Southland* leave Halifax three days late, on December 6, and arrive in the port of Liverpool eleven days afterwards again, on December 17.

Once having set foot in the United Kingdom, Naval personnel would have been either posted directly to a ship or ordered to undergo further training or to await a posting, at one of various Royal Navy establishments – these for the most part in England. In the case of Seaman Ogden, the destination was to be HMS *Victory I* at Portsmouth in the English county of Hampshire.

*HMS Victory, like most of the so-called stone-frigates (naval establishments on shore), was three entities: it was a training establishment originally, and also a holding-barracks for seamen not only in training but awaiting a posting to one of His Majesty's ships, its facilities initially set in the naval city and port of Portsmouth\*; thirdly, it was also the ship to which the majority of the land-based personnel would have been, at least officially and bureaucratically – if not physically - attached\*\*.*

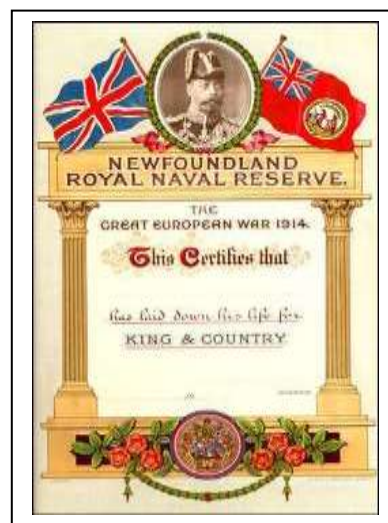


*At Portsmouth this vessel was HMS 'Victory', the warship from which Admiral Nelson had directed the Battle of Trafalgar – although her illustrious history is not limited to that one single incident.*

*\*The large influx of personnel due to the War necessitated further Divisions and functions being transferred to other areas of the United Kingdom.*

*(Right above: HMS 'Victory' in dry dock in the southern English port-city of Portsmouth where she has been for a century – photograph from Wikipedia)*

*\*\*Naval discipline differed in some ways from civil and even Army law, and those in naval uniform, even though based on land and perhaps never to go to sea, had to be on the books of a real ship for that discipline to be applied. Thus a normally small, obsolescent and obscure vessel – 'Victory' was the exception - was used for this purely bureaucratic purpose.*



*(Right above: A Memorial Scroll, a copy of which was distributed to the families of those who had sacrificed their life while serving in the Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve)*

Although no dates appear to be available, it could not have been long after Seaman Ogden's arrival in the United Kingdom on or about December 14 and his subsequent transfer to *Victory I* that he would have been admitted into hospital, likely the *Royal Hospital Haslar*, on the Gosport Peninsula.

The son of John Elias Ogden (found as *Augden* in the 1911 Census, and as *Hogdon* in that of 1921), former farmer and fisherman deceased on April 2, 1914, in St. George's Hospital of tuberculosis, and of Catharine (known as *Kate*) Ogden (née *Gillis*\*), he was also brother to Adelaide, Arthur, Mary, Edith, Margaret, Louis, Augustin, Eunice (Eugenie?), Mary-E. and to Michael.

*\*The couple had been married in Port au Port on August 12, 1895.*

Seaman Ogden was reported as having...died of sickness...on January 30 of 1917 in hospital in England of measles and the ensuing broncho-pneumonia at the *reported* age of eighteen years: date of birth in Campbell's Creek – also known as simply *The Creek* – November 22 of 1998 (from enlistment papers) but also as January 11, 1899, in the 1911 Census.

*Seaman Ogden served only in the Royal Navy and was not in the service of Canada as is cited in some sources, notably the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.*

Seaman John Joseph Ogden was entitled to the British War Medal for his overseas service.



The above dossier has been researched, compiled and produced by Alistair Rice. Please email any suggested amendments or content revisions if desired to [criceadam@yahoo.ca](mailto:criceadam@yahoo.ca). Last updated – January 21, 2023.